

AFRL's newest member is an expert at 'shop talk'

by Timothy Anderl, AFRL Headquarters

WRIGHT- PATTERSON AFB, OHIO — The newest member of Air Force Research Laboratory's workforce, Chief Master Sergeant Patt Wright, is so dedicated to the goals of the lab that she can't bring herself to talk about anything else. In fact, she sometimes sleeps in AFRL headquarters' lobby so she will be able to remind even the earliest arrival at AFRL each morning of the organization and its goals.

Wright isn't a workaholic but a spokes-mannequin that is used by AFRL's Corporate Communications Marketing Team to introduce the laboratory to industry, academic and government partners when they visit symposiums and conferences that AFRL attends throughout the year.

Wright made her debut at the Aerospace Sciences Exhibit in Reno, Nev. in January 2000.

The idea came about when Sue Sobieski, a representative from AFRL's Corporate Marketing Team, spotted a similar mannequin at the February 1999 National Conference and Exhibition for Trade Show and Marketing Professionals, a conference for marketing professionals that exposes them to the latest in exhibit technologies. The mannequin had a face that was rear projected through an opening in the head and appeared to speak to onlookers.

While at the conference, Sobieski spoke with a representative from People Vision Inc., a company based in Roselle, New Jersey and relayed the information to her counterparts on AFRL's marketing team when she returned.

"We had looked at something like this before only we were going to use holograms," said Harry Brown, Chief for the Marketing Team at AFRL headquarters. "The hologram had two problems; it was too costly and most holograms have to be front projected, which was just too difficult to accommodate in the halls that we are usually in."

Brown said the team agreed to contact People Vision about a mannequin. After discussing what AFRL was looking for, People Vision sent a proposal, which was approved with some changes that was followed by a contract a short time later. "First, we began working on the script, a lot of which was



HAVE WE MET? — AFRL's newest member, Chief MSgt. Patt Wright, made her debut at the Aerospace Sciences exhibit in Reno, Nev. in January. Wright is a spokes-mannequin that speaks to AFRL exhibit visitors about the mission and goals of the lab and its technology directorates.

taken from the script of AFRL Commander General Richard R. Paul's eight minute video and other information that we supplied to People Vision," Brown said. "Then we selected the actress who would be the voice and face of Wright."

After the script was approved by AFRL public affairs, Harry Brown and Fred Bennett flew to New Jersey where actress Barbara McCulloh, an actress who has performed in several off-Broadway productions, was filmed from the neck up performing the script. McCulloh's performance was then transferred to a video disc that is projected through the back of the mannequin's head to give her life-like features and the appearance of talking. McCulloh's voice is broadcast through an amplifier that sits behind Wright.

According to Wayne Sullivant, the president of People Vision, the face of the mannequin is sculpted from poly-

ethylene terephthalate glycol plastic that is vacuum formed to fit the average 3-D features of a human face. Sullivan added that both the screen and video image, which applies the technologies of 3-D television, are sculpted to relieve any distortions in the applications.

When Wright was delivered to AFRL headquarters in December 1999, the marketing team was faced with dressing her. After deciding that she should have a Chief grade, Chief Master Sergeant select Barbara Nie, the chief of AFRL's web team, purchased a BDU uniform, the accessories for the uniform, and combat boots.

"[Nie] realized that her hair was too long; that it wasn't to regulation," Brown said. "So Sue Sobieski and Susan Smith gave her a haircut." Brown added that Smith, also from the marketing team was responsible for naming Wright.

Brown said that since they've debuted Wright, people have said that she is "state-of-the-art" and "a little bit spooky because she is so life-like." General Richard R. Paul, commander of AFRL, saw Wright after the team returned from Reno and has invited her to be in the lobby at his retirement dinner on April 13, Brown said.

The laboratory's spokes-mannequin is one of only two units in the Department of Defense. An early version, which



LOOKING HER BEST — Susan Sobieski, left, and Susan Smith, members of the AFRL Marketing Team, cut Chief MSgt. Patt Wright's hair to ensure that it meets Air Force regulations. Wright was seen by AFRL exhibit visitors from industry, academia and other government agencies at a conference in January.

has been upgraded from projection to video technology, appears at the U.S. Air Force Museum. @